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Position Statements of the Presidential Candidates on Federal Role in Dealing with Sprawl

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Response from Governor George W. Bush

One way to address sprawl is to make cities more attractive to families and businesses. Inner-city schools must be made more effective, we must continue to combat crime, Brownfields must be cleaned up and redeveloped, and taxes and regulations must provide an atmosphere where entrepreneurs can flourish.

Question from the Planning Commissioners Journal to the Candidates for President of the United States:

"Many citizens appear increasingly concerned about sprawl, the declining health of downtown areas, and the loss of open space and natural areas. While many state and local governments are seeking to address these concerns, we would like to know what role, if any, you believe the federal government should play?"

Response from Vice President Al Gore

Many citizens are increasingly concerned about sprawl, the declining health of downtown areas, and the loss of open space and natural areas. As a longtime advocate of environmental protection and smart growth, I share their concern. That is why I have launched my initiative to help restore livable communities -- places where young and old

To address urban sprawl and cleanup and redevelop the nation's 450,000 Brownfields, I will direct the EPA to establish high standards for brownfield cleanups that will provide more flexibility than the current Superfund standards; provide redevelopers with protection from federal liability at brownfields cleaned up under state programs that meet high federal standards; focus the efforts of the federal government on developing cleanup techniques and new cleanup technologies; reform the Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund by cutting red tape and block granting funds to the states; and extend permanently the Brownfield cleanup tax incentive that is scheduled to expire on December 31, 2001.

To encourage more Local and Private Conservation, I will fully fund the \$900 million Land and Water Conservation Fund and provide 50 percent for state and local conservation efforts; establish the Private Stewardship Grant Program to provide \$10 million of the federal portion of the Land and Water Conservation Fund to individuals and groups engaged in local, private conservation; support excluding 50 percent of any gain realized from private, voluntary sales of land or interests in land for conservation purposes; and eliminate the death tax to make it easier for private land owners to pass their land, intact, from one generation to the next.

Infrastructure is also an important component addressing sprawl and the federal government must recognize that solving traffic congestion requires a comprehensive approach that provides maximum flexibility. That's why I believe states receiving federal gasoline tax dollars should have the necessary flexibility from federal strings to meet their diverse needs.

George W. Bush

can walk, bike, and play together; places where we not only protect historic old neighborhoods, but where farms, green spaces, and forests add life and beauty to the newest of suburbs; places where a high quality of life attracts cutting-edge businesses and talented employees; places where we can spend less time in traffic and more time with our families.

In some communities, unplanned sprawl and poor development decisions have compromised the American tradition of development that enhances civic life and family well-being. As President, I will work to help communities meet this challenge -- not through a top-down federal role, but by giving communities more choices and more of the tools and resources they need to preserve green spaces, ease traffic congestion, promote regional cooperation, improve schools, and enhance economic competitiveness -- so communities can grow according to their own local values.

- *More green and open spaces.* I am committed to preserving open spaces, building and renovating parks, improving water quality, and cleaning up old, abandoned factory lots. To do this, I have proposed tax initiatives for state and local governments that will leverage \$9.5 billion in total investment and support creating a permanent fund of over \$1 billion a year in Federal assistance devoted to greenspace and land conservation.

- *Easing traffic congestion.* By investing in mass transit and light rail, and by helping communities develop alternatives to clogged highways, I believe we can reduce traffic and air pollution, and build the stronger sense of community that close-knit neighborhoods foster.

- *Schools as centers of communities.* At a time when too many schools are arbitrarily built farther and farther away from the center of communities, I will work to encourage school districts to involve the whole

community in planning and designing new schools -- in locations that make sense to the whole community.

- *Urban redevelopment.* Through innovative strategies such as the Empowerment Zone initiative to attract private investment to distressed communities, and the agreement I announced last year under which the nation's homebuilders will build one million new homes in urban America over the next ten years, I will work to promote investment and redevelopment in historic and neglected neighborhoods, so that they are not simply abandoned as people move further and further out.

- *Regional cooperation for smarter growth.* Issues like traffic, air pollution, and jobs don't recognize defined borders, and neither should our solutions. I will continue to work to bring communities together, and to provide new planning and mapping tools to help them grow cooperatively, according to local values and shared goals.

At every step of the way, I will highlight local successes -- and make clear that the federal government's role should never be that of "beauty commissar." Instead, I will strive to amplify citizens' voices, and help communities build and grow according to their own choices.

Al Gore

* The question was prepared by the [Planning Commissioners Journal](http://www.plannersweb.com), and sent to Vice President Al Gore, Governor George W. Bush, and Ralph Nader c/o their official campaign web sites. As of the date of this posting, no reply had been received from Mr. Nader. For permission to print or circulate this page for other than personal use, please contact the Planning Commissioners Journal at: pcj@together.net. No permission is needed to link to this page; however, this page may be removed after the November 7, 2000 election.

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